

# Introduction

*“Our relations . . . the mixed bloods”*: *Indigenous Transformation and Dispossession in the Western Great Lakes* is about racial ideology, settler colonialism, and the transformation of an indigenous polity and a sociocultural landscape as the outcomes of the treaty process and subsequent federal policy. It details the ways in which the terms “half-breeds” and “mixed bloods” emerged in the context of the fur trade and the treaty economies in the Great Lakes region over the course of the nineteenth century, then effervesced as social distinctions with the establishment and allotment of Indian reservations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and then finally receded in the twentieth century. The emergence of these social distinctions was the outcome of competing conceptions of belonging and difference that interacted in the fur trade and treaty economy periods and transformed the indigenous polity as a result. I attempt to capture those conceptions in the title *“Our relations . . . mixed bloods”* as “our relations” is the term repeatedly used by Native people to refer to “the mixed bloods belonging to the Chippewa of Lake Superior,” a phrase from the 1854 Treaty of LaPointe.

These distinctions made the transformation of the landscape of the Western Great Lakes region possible because the so-called mixed bloods were distinguished as a class and then recruited to influence the internal tribal politics and facilitate the treaty process. What had been a commons organized by kinship and customary law was appropriated and enclosed by settlers for purposes of settlement and resource extraction. Tactical use of the social distinction between Indians and mixed bloods played a critical role in the very material process of dispossession specifically enabling the capitalization of first mining companies in northern Wisconsin and then lumber companies in Minnesota, thus initiating a complete reimagining and subsequent transformation of the landscape and the peoples who lived upon it. This case study aspires to link ethnic formation and transformation to

the forces of settler colonialism and the subsequent changes of the Western Great Lakes landscape. It also aspires to reveal a hitherto largely unrecognized capacity and agency on the part of indigenous polities to assimilate sources of power in the form of persons and things and, in doing so, simultaneously reproduce and transform themselves. This study is motivated in relatively current historical events that threatened another major environmental if not indigenous transformation.

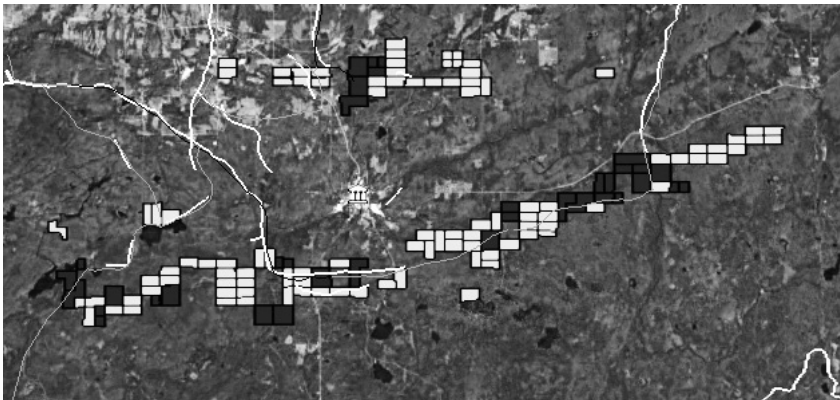
Shortly after Scott Walker was elected governor in November of 2010, with the campaign slogan Wisconsin: Open for Business, Gogebic Taconite announced that it intended to begin the process of seeking the permits to mine low-grade iron ore in the Penokee Hills, just south of the Bad River Chippewa Reservation and within the lands ceded by the Lake Superior Ojibwe in the Treaty of 1842 where the Chippewa bands had treaty-established rights to hunt, fish, and gather recently litigated in federal court. The proposed mine site lay in the headwaters of the Bad River, which flows north to Lake Superior where it enters “the 16,000-acre Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs, the largest undeveloped wetland complex in the upper Great Lakes.”<sup>1</sup> In 2012, the sloughs were designated as an environmentally significant Ramsar site, recognizing their importance at the international level.<sup>2</sup> The sloughs are also the Bad River Band’s breadbasket because they are the source of wild rice, “the food that grows on the water,” and a condition of the possibility of the community’s culturally distinct existence.<sup>3</sup> Wild rice is very sensitive to the acid drainage that a mining project would inevitably introduce into the watershed. Stopping the mine from being developed became the highest priority for the Bad River Band.

In February 2013, the Wisconsin legislature passed Wisconsin Act 1, an industry-friendly mining bill exempting ferrous mining from many of the state’s environmental protection regulations and making the expansion of iron-mining state policy, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of public testimony opposed the bill.<sup>4</sup> In the spring of that year, several members of the nearby Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe Indians, who share treaty usufructuary rights in the ceded territories with the other Ojibwe bands, established the Education and Harvest Camp on county land in the Penokees. The symbolic action foregrounded the treaty rights that had been reserved on the lands ceded by the Chippewa to the federal government in the nineteenth century as participants actively harvesting fish, animals, and plants. Their goal was to educate the public about the meaning and value of the land, inviting them to imagine a more democratically organized landscape abundant in renewable resources. In doing so, Indian people would contest the state of Wisconsin and Gogebic Taconite’s effort to define and designate the land for mineral resource extraction.

It had been only ten years since the Sokaogon community, another band of Lake Superior Chippewas, 150 miles to southwest of Bad River, had finally defeated the efforts of a series of mining companies that sought to extract metallic sulfide ore from lands immediately adjacent to their small reservation. The proposed mine in the Sokaogon community also threatened the community's wild rice.<sup>5</sup>

The May 2013 issue of the nationwide, independent, Hayward, Wisconsin-based *News from Indian Country* ran a short three-paragraph article entitled "Chippewa and Santee allotments discovered in Penokee Range." The article opened with the line, "The meaning of almost two hundred 80 and 160 acre allotments issued to Ojibwe and Santee Sioux Indians in the late 1854 [treaty] through 1880s on top of the Penokee Range ore deposit is still unknown." The article went on to assure readers that "members of several tribes are currently researching the history and the chain of title to clarify [under] what authority the allotments were made and under what conditions, legal or otherwise they were surrendered." Finally, the article promised a list of names of those allottees, noting that the allotment upon which the Harvest and Education Camp was sited belonged to Elizabeth Trudell, implying that she was an ancestor of the well-known indigenous activist/poet/musician John Trudell.

A map, reproduced below, originally showing the Ojibwe allotments in blue and the Sioux allotments in maroon, created by Amorin Mello, accompanied the article.



Map I.1. The mixed-blood allotments in the Penokee Range of Northern Wisconsin ca. 1858. Light rectangles represent Chippewa allotments and dark rectangles represent Dakota allotments. The array traces the iron formation in the Penokees. Map by Amorin Mello. Photo by the author.

Blog postings on *Save the Water's Edge* from May and June made reference to other allotments in the area and expressed the desire to learn why they are no longer in the possession of Indian people. Posting on May 23, Lac Courte Oreilles tribal member and publisher of *News From Indian Country* Paul DeMain listed the names of people who once held allotments in the area: J. B. Corbin, Robert Morrin, John Baptist Crane, John Baptist Denomie, John Hoskin, Michael Lambert, and Joseph Roy.<sup>6</sup> Some Ojibwe readers of the newspaper in the region still carried these surnames, and several of those names are common in the Ojibwe communities to this day. These readers would be the descendants of those “Ojibwe and Santee Sioux Indians” who had been allotted, though they apparently there was little current collective memory of that moment that took place about seven generations ago.

With the passage of Wisconsin Act 1, in the spring of 2013, the Bad River Band made the decision to hire a team of researchers to do a study of its traditional cultural resources and their relationship to environmental integrity. The goal was to produce a document to assist the band in reviewing its water quality standards since the band had been granted Treatment-as-State Status under the Clean Water Act.<sup>7</sup> The report would also be submitted to federal officials with the authority to grant permits to mining applicants reminding those officials of their trust responsibilities to the people of Bad River by calling attention to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires government permitting agencies to “take into account” the historical significance of cultural properties at risk of being compromised by development.<sup>8</sup>

While doing the ethnographic component of that study, I visited the Harvest Camp in the Penokees and was given a copy of the above-mentioned map by Paul DeMain, co-founder and publisher of *News from Indian Country*. Paul had made multiple copies of the map and was distributing them to interested visitors. I would learn from Amorin Mello, who made the map using data from the Bureau of Land Management's online archive of land patents, that the allotments in the Penokees were authorized by the seventh article of the Treaty of 1854 that granted eighty-acre parcels to “mixed bloods, belonging to the Lake Superior Chippewa.”

Amorin Mello has had an avocational interest in the history of the region for a number of years and is the co-author with Leo Filipczak of a blog on the history of the Chequamegon region since 2015.<sup>9</sup> What had been referred to as “Ojibwe and Santee Sioux Indians” in the newspaper article were, at the time the treaty was signed, mixed bloods, a marked class of indigenous political subjects. At the time, I noted the current indifference to distinguishing between mixed bloods and Indians and reflected upon the fact that this was a significant difference at the time of the treaties. The questions began to multiply.

How was it that lands had been allotted and lost south of the border of the Bad River Reservation on lands that had been ceded in a previous treaty? Did grantees ever live there? If so, would there still be evidence of their presence? How were the allotments in the Penokees alienated, that is, lost to their original owners? What role did the federal government play in the implementation of the treaty provision? What happened to those people who held title to those lands, and why was there apparently little or no collective memory of their tenure and dispossession?

Two relatively obscure published scholarly accounts, both longer than Edmund Danziger's<sup>10</sup> single-paragraph summary, address the implementation and effects of this provision of 1854 treaty. In 1906, Gustav O. Brohough wrote a master's thesis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison titled "Sioux and Chippewa Half-Breed Scrip and Its Application to the Minnesota Pine Lands." In this work, Brohough narrated the history of the creation and fraught establishment of the Sioux half-breed tract on Lake Pepin in Minnesota and then went on in twenty pages to describe the ways in which the provision in the 1854 treaty with the Chippewa led to the creation of half-breed scrip that was fraudulently used by lumber interests to secure access to the pine lands of Minnesota. Brohough pointed out a critical legal step that made this dispossession possible insofar as the scrip was written in a way that made it illegal to transfer: "To evade this provision, made to protect the half-breed from the acts of those who should attempt to take advantage of his ignorance and his necessities, two powers of attorney were attached to each certificate, one authorizing entries to be made of the lands, by an attorney on behalf of the half-breed, and the other authorizing conveyance to be made of these lands after patents should be procured."<sup>11</sup>

Apparently, something very similar must have taken place in Wisconsin very shortly after the treaty was signed for purposes of capitalizing mining companies and before lumbering interests entered the picture.

Brohough did impressive work for the time. However, he left unaddressed the manner in which this provision was administered, leaving unreconciled the great concern on the federal government's part that the scrip only be redeemed by eligible "half-breeds" for land and the outcome of the land being appropriated by corporate interests. And though Brohough questioned the legality of mixed bloods signing away power of attorney, he left the issue unexplored. Furthermore, the term "half-breeds" is left entirely unexamined as well. Thus, he unreflectively reproduced and transmitted a racial and social category whose existence was necessary to facilitate an indigenous transformation and dispossession.

William Watts Folwell gave an account of the "Chippewa Halfbreed Scrip" in appendix 9 to his 1956 *History of Minnesota* that offers some information about the administration of this policy. Folwell pointed out that the

half-breeds were considered in the treaty in order to assure their assistance in “gaining the consent of the Indians to the treaty.” He noted the General Land Office’s desire that the 312 certificates enabling mixed-blood land claims not be transferable to anyone. Folwell then went on to discuss the effects of the 1864 ruling of the new secretary of the interior liberalizing qualifications for inclusion as eligible mixed bloods, which included the quadrupling of the number of certificates issued. Folwell repeated Brohaugh’s recognition of the use of powers of attorney, adding that the legal validity of blank powers of attorney was not questioned at the time, an issue that I will explore in detail in chapter 5. The balance of Folwell’s account describes the fraudulent scrip certificate production and governmental response to it in the late 1860s and early 1870s especially in regard to acquiring timber lands in Minnesota. He finally concluded that it is “no pleasure to tell this story.”<sup>12</sup> Both of these essays were written long before the emergence of a critical ethnohistorical scholarship that would interrogate the history and organization of the indigenous polities that signed treaties with the federal government. These accounts were also written before efforts to critically examine the impact of racial ideologies on both the constitution of indigenous polities and the implementation of treaty provisions.

Richard White’s *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* published in 1991 initiated a period of critical Great Lakes historical scholarship wherein he profoundly and permanently revised the declensionist, imperial narrative with the idea that relations between indigenous peoples in the region and Europeans were far more bilateral than had been represented in the past. He shows that Europeans were incapable of imposing their political will by force upon indigenous peoples, and the result was the creation of a middle ground, “a process of mutual invention,” wherein there was “a willingness of those who created it to justify their own actions in terms of what they perceived to be their partner’s cultural premises.”<sup>13</sup> As this reflexivity inevitably led to misinterpretations and distortions, it resulted in improvised cultural, political, social, and economic forms both in the diplomatic register and in the ordinary lives of the French and Indian people interacting with each other.

Recently, Michael Witgen has critiqued and developed White’s thesis of the middle ground to show that this region White referred to in French as the *pays d’en haut* is better thought of Anishinaabewaki, a complex, dynamic, decentralized sociopolitical formation organized by kinship giving even more agency to indigenous people than did Richard White. The peoples of Anishinaabewaki engaged with Europeans over the course of several centuries and created an indigenous New World, according to Witgen. In the very long run, the European-descended people would come to control the landscape, and indigenous societies would be diminished, marginalized, and largely

segregated from the dominant society. But in that period of time that lasted for as long as two centuries in the Great Lakes region and characterized by the fur trade, the forces of assimilation emanated from both settler and indigenous societies. I am particularly interested in showing how the dynamism of this indigenous New World includes structural transformation, entailing the so-called mixed bloods.

The idea of Anishinaabewaki has also been taken up by Michael McDonnell in his effort to re-establish the centrality of Odawa Anishinaabeg people in the Great Lakes region in the history of America itself.<sup>14</sup> Both Witgen and McDonnell argue that until the mid-nineteenth century, native forces shaped European intentions more than the reverse. Furthermore, those intentions were oriented by fundamentally different conceptions of belonging and difference. This has important implications for how we understand the very idea of mixed bloods.<sup>15</sup>

Insofar as the problem this study addresses is the status of “mixed bloods, belonging to the Lake Superior Chippewa,” as the treaty of 1854 describes them, the interaction between indigenous women and nonindigenous men is of particular interest. This subject has been thoughtfully explored by scholars such as Sylvia Van Kirk, Jennifer Brown, Jacqueline Peterson, Susan-Sleeper Smith, Susan Gray, Lucy Murphy, Carolyn Podruchny, and Rebecca Kugel to name only the most prominent, and I will draw upon their insightful works throughout. Becoming the husbands and partners of indigenous women—and therefore, brothers-in-law and sons-in-law of indigenous men—working class Frenchmen largely acculturated to an indigenous order of value and practice, albeit one that was changing by virtue of this engagement and related social, economic, and political processes. The exclusionary quality of the ascendant European conception of race prevented Indian people from traversing a symmetrical cultural trajectory within settler society. Instead, Indians appropriated elements of European culture and remained Indian.

The children born of this engagement were imagined and regarded very differently by indigenous people and colonizers. Indigenous people referred to them as “our relations,” that is, they were incorporated into indigenous society in the comprehensive idiom of kinship. Here I will draw upon and extend Michael Witgen’s analysis of Anishinaabeg ethnosociology and explore the full implications of the distinction between *inawemaagen* (relatives) and *meuyaagizid* (strangers or foreigners) in the political register.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, nonindigenous people called the category of people with ethnically heterogeneous parentage “mixed bloods” or “half-breeds” when speaking English or “chicot” when speaking French. Very late in the period, the term “Métis” would circulate after the emergence of a distinct ethnic group in the Red River Valley.

The point here is that mixed bloods’ distinguishability from the indigenous population was contested as revealed in the difference in the terms used by indigenous people and Europeans. Over time, most mixed bloods were assimilated to indigenous society, and their genealogical pedigree was a distinction that made little difference to indigenous people, while the increasingly hegemonic conception of race excluded mixed bloods from full participation in non-Indian society. Mixed bloods were *inawemaagen*, relatives.

French men had to be assimilated to indigenous societies as kind of relative in order to exchange goods and extract furs. Anglo-American society increasingly understood similarity and difference in ranked racial terms. Indigenous society did not, for the most part, and as a result, the progeny were assimilated to indigenous society. And though these children of French men and Indian women were different from their indigenous kin in terms of their capacity for brokerage, they were not so different as to be considered anything but “our relations,” thus enmeshed in the networks of obligation and exchange that make up indigenous society. The skills they acquired from their European fathers were often deployed by indigenous political leaders. At the same time, the dominant’s society’s view of their difference made them candidates for special consideration in the land cessions treaties, a strategic move with the goal of making the indigenous communities more manageable and transformable along lines envisioned by settlers.

“Mixed-blood” and “half-breed” are hegemonic racial terms: they come and go without much comment or justification on the parts of the people who used them at the time and, to some extent, by some scholars who write about them, as we shall see. The terms were naturalized in the process. Asking in what sense mixed bloods or half-breeds “belonged to the Lake Superior Chippewa” is to beg the question, for example. It is to smuggle in and tacitly assert the existence of a shared conception that one is seemingly questioning. From an indigenous perspective, the category of person that whites called “mixed bloods” belonged to the Lake Superior Chippewa in quite the same way the people that whites designated as “Indians” themselves belonged to the Lake Superior Chippewa. Both belonged. The Lake Superior Chippewa was circumscribed by kinship, other distinctions such as heterogeneous parentage without much significant standing, or at least not the significance that the settler population increasingly thinking in terms of race would give it.

The very question presumes the ascendancy of race as a means of figuring belonging and difference in the upper Great Lakes region and, of course, the idea of race has a history in any setting where it circulates. It is an ideology that serves the interests of some at the expense of others. It was both imposed upon and assimilated by indigenous people to different degrees.



Over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, as non-Indian traders, missionaries and government officials came amongst indigenous peoples with their various interests, and in their various capacities, they came to imagine aboriginal society as constituted of groups of people, distinguishable by parentage, or “blood,” hence “mixed bloods” and “full bloods.” This imaginative model was a project, a discursive undertaking, a hegemonic practice, albeit a consequential one, and one that was variously engaged in by whites, the so-called mixed bloods themselves, and “Indians” or, later, “full bloods,” at different times and for different reasons.

The presumptive distinguishability of mixed bloods was accomplished over time in ordinary acts of what Pierre Bourdieu describes as symbolic violence, wherein the subjects of an imposed distinction acquiesce in that distinction. Reproduced by missionaries, governmental officials, school personnel, members of the fur-trade business sector, and other non-Indigenous people, an emergent and minor internal indigenous social distinction became the basis for a dichotomous division of that indigenous world. When the distinction is inscribed in treaties, it takes on a far greater solidity. Pierre Bourdieu writes: “Law consecrates the established order by consecrating the vision of that order which is held by the State . . . Law is the quintessential form of the symbolic power of naming that creates the things named, and creates social groups in particular. It confers upon the reality which arises from its classificatory operations the maximum permanence that any social entity has the power to confer upon another, the permanence which we attribute to objects.”<sup>17</sup>

Very consequentially, inscribed in treaties for a number of decades in the nineteenth century, the designation “mixed-blood” was imagined and then asserted to be a very clear distinction. And the term was deployed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the Ojibwe reservations were allotted as it came to denote a progressive political orientation critical of the traditional leadership.

The term “mixed blood” was no longer significant by the middle and certainly the late twentieth century, though the term’s disappearance was a fraught political process as we shall see in the last two chapters. So now, in the twenty-first century, the names of tribal members from the Ojibwe communities of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan include many French or French-originated patronyms—the legacy of these mixed bloods—and those patronyms are as Indian from the community’s perspective as names such as Stone, Bearheart, Martin, and Moose, or Gashkibos.

This study is centered on the ways in which a single sentence in a land cession treaty signed between the Lake Superior bands of Ojibwe and

the federal government in 1854 was interpreted and implemented and the consequences this process had for the larger landscape and the people who lived upon it. The provision appeared in Article II of the treaty, the section that created reservations, both the collectively and individually held parcels that were reserved for the benefit of native people. The Article “set[s] apart and withhold[s] from sale . . . the following-described tracts of land.” After identifying what will become collectively-held tribal estates, the seventh paragraph reads: “Each head of a family, or single person over twenty-one years of age at the present time of the mixed bloods, belonging to the Chippewas of Lake Superior, shall be entitled to eighty acres of land, to be selected by them under the direction of the President, and which shall be secured to them by patent in the usual form.”<sup>18</sup>

Most mixed bloods never received nor lived on those eighty-acre parcels because the right to those parcels was appropriated by would-be mining and lumbering interests almost immediately. In Wisconsin, parcels were consolidated by a small group of non-Indians who incorporated themselves as the state’s first iron-mining companies. This was not the first time that the apparent intent of a land provision in an Indian treaty proved to be illusory.

Paul Wallace Gates identified what he called the “nonstatutory method of land disposal”<sup>19</sup> in his analysis of treaties signed with Miami and Potawatomi several decades earlier. Here a provision of the treaty authorized patenting of land to certain individuals or to a certain class of individuals within tribal society. The beneficiaries of the provision then conveyed their patents to the traders. Federal agents in collusion with the traders would then certify the transfer to gain the required presidential approval to alleviate any congressional concerns. Dispossession accomplished.

Was the mixed-blood provision of the Treaty of 1854, in fact, one of the last acts in this farce? The outcome would certainly support this contention. Yet, though it was local traders who would secure power of attorney from mixed-blood beneficiaries and so gain access to the patents to the lands, federal officials appear to have made a considerable effort to prevent this dispossession. They also repeatedly indicated their intention that the mixed bloods be secure in their possession of relatively small tracts of land then perceived to be viable for agricultural purposes both to pacify them and to make them models for their full-blooded kin nearby. This aspiration failed.

The trouble caused by the implementation of this treaty provision was the subject of a congressional investigation less than two decades after the treaty was ratified by the Senate and made law. *The Report of the Special Commission in the Matter of Chippewa Scrip, 1871*<sup>20</sup> included in the Report to the Secretary of the Interior detailed the ways in which the provision of

the treaty was abused by speculators to the detriment of the intended beneficiaries. The report focused on the period *after 1863* when the commissioner of Indian affairs made a decision that had the effect of inviting widespread abuse with hundreds of individuals making claims.

As it would turn out, in the 1860s, entrepreneurial non-Indians began to counterfeit government-issued scrip and then gather up mixed-blood signatures in order to empower themselves to locate timber lands in Minnesota, capitalizing a lumber industry that would change the landscape and political economy of that state as well. The present study, however, draws attention to the first few years of the implementation of this treaty provision when the interest in the Lake Superior region was not yet in trees but in minerals. It may be thought of as a kind of rehearsal for what would turn out to be a more substantial dispossession process in Minnesota. Recognition of the failure to realize the stated goals of the policy may also have played a role in crafting the provisions and the implementation process of the Allotment Act of 1887 several decades later.

The dispossession of the Lake Superior mixed bloods had important consequences for the landscape of northern Wisconsin. Somewhat similar to what Kathleen Conzen revealed took place with the nearby Winnebago, called Ho-Chunk today. In that case, “the federal funds that the Winnebago represented” were converted into town sites and city lots.<sup>21</sup> In the present case, the mixed-blood right to land capitalized the earliest efforts at mining in the western part of the Gogebic Range called the Penokees.

The failure of the policy and the loss of that land simplified the ethnic landscape. Before the dispossession, there was Anishinaabewaki, a complex, evolving, and culturally heterogeneous, hybrid, indigenous sociopolitical formation largely organized by kinship and an increasing settler population of Euro-Americans variously articulated with Anishinaabewaki. After the dispossession, there would be a largely white civilization with social relations organized by contract and citizenship and Indian reservations, a truncated form of Anishinaabewaki situated on an extractive landscape in the hinterland of growing Midwestern urban centers.

This moment provides a window into society, culture, and change in the region south of Lake Superior at time when race, a new paradigm of belonging and difference, was on the ascent and culture and kinship as means of organizing groups were threatened. I am interested in the emergence in the eighteenth century, the subsequent effervescence, and the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reassimilation of the mixed-blood members of indigenous society that give context to this dispossession. This was accomplished by a network of actors with different intentions and powers

to affect their interests both within the mixed-blood sector of Anishinaabewaki as well as without.

This book will first sketch an overview of the Ojibwe or Chippewa of Lake Superior, the largest group of indigenous people of the region that articulated with the Europeans interested in extracting furs. It then goes on to a description of the fur trade in the Western Great Lakes and the consequent emergence of the so-called mixed bloods, first a social category of indigenous person, then, west of the Great Lakes region, a separate ethnicity in the form of the Métis of Canada. As the power of the United States increased in the early nineteenth century in the Great Lakes region, its policy initiatives shaped indigenous society, culture, and politics. It is here that the ascendant ideology of race played an important role in reshaping internal indigenous social categories. I then explore how so-called mixed-blood people were distinguished and reified in treaties over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century to show how the Treaty of 1854 represented both continuity and a rupture in federal Indian policy. Here sketching the contours of how the idea of race shaped the imagined horizons for Indian people, “full” and “mixed” bloods alike.

At the center of this book is an examination of the implementation of the 1854 treaty provision for the mixed bloods who belonged to the Lake Superior Chippewa and its consequences for both the Indian community and for the larger landscape. It will entail a detailed examination of archival sources revealing an administrative process characterized by the production of ambiguity and plausible deniability of failing to live up to the federal government’s emerging trust responsibility. Finally, the last two chapters reveal how the mixed bloods “belonging to the Lake Superior Chippewa” were mostly assimilated through kinship to the reservation communities and the implications this demographic shift had for the Ojibwe polities in the upper Midwest.

The study is an effort to show how a changing economy, competing conceptions of belonging and difference, colonization, and law interact in the evolution of an indigenous polity. Focusing on the implementation a single provision of a single treaty and the subsequent consequences provides a window into the efforts of an indigenous polity to retain control of the means of its own social and cultural reproduction, even as that polity transformed.